

## ***Editorial Department.***

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IN this number of the JOURNAL we publish a review, by an Eastern contributor, of Dr. Bucknill's pamphlet, on "American Asylums," which seems to call for comment. It deals, among other things, with the spirit and general accuracy of Dr. Bucknill's paper, and as we think, justly animadverts on the same.

It seems hardly possible as yet, for an American to represent English institutions, and customs, to the satisfaction of Englishmen, and certainly it is true, that Englishmen seldom see and represent American institutions and customs so as to satisfy a well-informed American. It is not often that we find flagrant cases on their respective sides, such as Dickens and Hawthorne, but such as they are, they are far from rare.

But whether the mutual ignorance and prejudices, concerning each other, of England and the United States, are disappearing or not—and we think they are disappearing—there can be no doubt they continue to exist, and the pamphlet of Dr. Bucknill's is a proof of it. He seems to have laid himself open not only to the strictures of our contributor, but also to those much more severe, but not less just of Dr. Joseph Parrish, well known to the profession in this country, who has published an open letter to Dr. Bucknill, in reply to some of his misstatements in regard to the workings of Inebriate Asylums in this country.

In the course of his letter, Dr. Parrish is led to say, "It is very evident, my dear doctor, that you did not visit our institutions with the purpose of learning much about them. You did not see them in any earnest spirit of inquiry and ex-



amination. You display a very discreditable degree of ignorance of their polity, and of the laws by which they were created, and under which they exist," etc. (*Journal of Mental Science*, October, 1877. P. 455.) And we are sorry to say, from the facts of the case, that the complaints and criticisms of Dr. Parrish appear to be justified in no small degree. We hope to see in the future the two great English speaking peoples more intelligent in respect to each other, and more tolerant of mutual advice and criticism, that they may finally see, more nearly eye to eye, on all great questions involving their welfare, and their relations to the rest of the world.

The other point in the review of Dr. Bucknill's paper, to which we wish to call attention, is that of the expense of American asylums, and more particularly those in the great State of New York, to which particular allusion is made in the pamphlet of Dr. Bucknill. It is contended by our contributor that Dr. Bucknill was not correctly informed in relation to this subject, and the New York State Asylum at Utica, under the able management of Dr. J. P. Gray, is specially mentioned, and the figures of the asylum for the past few years are discussed in an interesting and suggestive manner. So far as we can see, the statements are reliable, and seem to show, to say the least, that a fresh consideration of the question of the expenditure of the moneys contributed for the support of our public charities, is needed. For it seems to us that it can be made clear, that not only is the average cost of maintenance of pauper patients often far above the liberal necessities of their cases, but that the cost of the buildings erected are often on such a scale of extravagance as to amount to a waste—absolute waste, in view of the requirements of the case—of one-half of the means contributed toward their erection. We now refer to such institutions, for example, as those being erected at Buffalo, and Poughkeepsie, in New York State, and at Danvers, Massachusetts. In these brief remarks, we do not forget that the asylum at Utica belongs to a class called "mixed," where both public and private patients are treated. This latter class are more expensive, as a rule, than the public or pauper patients. And when, as appears to be true at Utica, the published reports give us no means for



knowing how many of the whole number are private and how many pauper patients, it is of course impossible to compare such institutions with those which are purely charitable. But we are to return to a discussion of this whole subject in a future number.

When the cost of providing quarters for each pauper or indigent patient exceeds seven hundred to one thousand dollars, we feel that money is being needlessly expended, and when the expense of providing quarters for each patient rises from \$3,000 to \$5,000, we feel there is almost, if not quite, a criminal sacrifice of means, to the carelessness of Boards of Trustees, and to enable ambitious architects to immortalize themselves at the expense of funds wrung from the taxpayers in the name of the indigent insane.

But we cannot give adequate attention to this subject at present. It is our intention, however, to consider it to an extent commensurate with its importance, in the forthcoming volume of our JOURNAL, in relation to which subject we think we can furnish our readers with matter for thought.

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The W. & S. Tuke Prize of one hundred guineas, for "the best series of original cases and commentary, illustrative of the somatic etiology of various forms of insanity, accompanied, when possible, in fatal cases, by reports of postmortem examinations and microscopical preparations, their bearing on the symptoms being pointed out," has been awarded to our correspondent, Dr. E. C. Spitzka, of New York. According to the conditions of the competition, as stipulated by the British Medico-Psychological Association, it was open to all the world, but the right to withhold the award was reserved if there was no essay of sufficient merit. While of course there is no nationality to science, we must still admit feeling a considerable degree of satisfaction in having this prize awarded to one of our American neurologists.

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The Index to the present volume will appear with our January issue of the coming year.